



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

that statements made decades apart do not always cohere. Possibly it is this that leaves a sense of dissatisfaction with Mr. Harrison's final results. What is this humanity of which he speaks and for which he supplicates reverence? He calls it a sum total of human life but in what sense is it a sum total? At times we are tempted to believe that here we are in the very presence of god—Mr. Harrison would gladly spell it so—but we are puzzled to find that it is neither God nor a substitute for God. So we must be adroit if we would not be lost among these paradoxes of which the author is fond. What place shall be given social evils in this scheme? Does humanity imply some selective principle? Indeed positivism provokes a host of unanswered queries. But, whatever may be true of other religions, positivism should be able to answer every reasonable question. So the relation of this system to ethic, the character of the immortality it promises, the practical worth of the system not to the dreamer but to the common man, all suggest debatable ground. Yet the movement, upon the whole, has been of worth in the emphasis it lays upon scientific method in religious thinking, in the subordination of the ontological interests to the practical interests of human life and in the stress that it lays upon the social relations of man even in religion. Mr. Harrison has done good service in these matters and therefore his volumes are of interest despite the fact that they add little to what he had already printed.

WILLIAM THEODORE PAULLIN

MONMOUTH, ILL.

AN IMPORTANT STUDY OF THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MYSTICISM

Professor Delacroix' admirable work aims to study a few of the great Christian mystics from both the historical and the psychological points of view.¹ The author fortunately combines the learning of the historian with the insight and training of the psychologist—a combination too often lacking in recent writers on mysticism, but one that is essential to a just presentation of the subject. The detailed and exact historical knowledge possessed by our author gives a broad empirical basis for his psychological conclusions; and his ability and insight as a psychologist make the historical parts of his work luminous and intelligible.

Four typical mystics are chosen for investigation, namely, St. Theresa, Mme. Guyon, St. John of the Cross, and Suso. These were selected both because of the amount of trustworthy historical material concerning them,

¹ *Etudes d'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme: les grands mystiques chrétiens.* By Henri Delacroix. Paris: Alcan, 1908. 470 pages. Fr. 10.

and also because they display the full circle of the mystic life, which many of the lesser mystics experienced only in part. The method pursued is, first, intensive study of each of the four individuals and an analysis of the moments and of the evolution found in each separately; a comparison of results and the formulation of a general type and a law covering all; and finally an analysis of this type and an explanation of its elements, in part by the facts of psychology, in part by the historical doctrines and traditions of the Christian church.

Three chapters are devoted to St. Theresa. As a result of this careful study her life as a mystic falls into three distinct stages. The first is that of the joyous *oraison*, the sense of self united with God, the ecstasy—all sought for their own sakes and characterized by great emotional excitement and delight. This is followed by a second stage of diametrically opposite emotional tone—an ecstatic pain, a painful ecstasy, in which God is felt as absent and the soul is miserably conscious of itself as unworthy and as separated from God. Finally, in the third stage, which is the last, there is no ecstasy of joy or pain, no consciousness of self as united to or separated from God, but the self is completely forgotten, and God only seems present. There is now no more alternation between ecstasy and periods of “dryness,” no more seeking for emotional effects, but God seems constantly present and guides each detail of life, as the mystic believes. This final stage is therefore not so emotional as active. St. Theresa goes into the world and shows great energy and practical wisdom in founding and guiding nunneries. Action replaces ecstasy.

The same evolution through these three stages is found, with greater or less distinctness, in each of the other mystics studied; so that the mystic life is seen to be a systematized development, each stage of which has its part to play. “La vie mystique est un progrès et non un état.” To those whose acquaintance with mysticism is confined to some of the recent psychological studies of the subject, this will seem surprising. Murisier,^a for instance, knows nothing about the third stage as depicted by Delacroix, and makes ecstasy and the narrowing of consciousness the essence of mysticism. Delacroix’ broader historical knowledge and more empirical point of view has saved him from the narrowness of Murisier’s otherwise brilliant book. He has given us not merely a cross-section but a longitudinal section of the mystic life.

This systematization of the mystic’s life Delacroix accounts for partly by physiological and psychological causes, partly as a search, through trial and error, for a satisfactory inner life. In this the mystic is guided

^a *Les maladies du sentiment religieux.*

largely by subconscious aims and ideas. No psychologist has made greater use of the subconscious as a means of explanation than has Delacroix. The passivity of the mystic's visions, locutions, and intuitions, the sense of externality that comes with them, and the wisdom which they often display, in short nearly all that the mystics attribute to God, Delacroix explains by the subconscious. But, as he points out, theirs is not an ordinary subconsciousness, but one by nature religious, and, in addition, trained by years of constant moral endeavor, ascetic practices, and Christian teaching.

By his use of this hypothesis Delacroix is able to deal with all the facts without taking refuge in any supernatural or theological explanation. And on the other hand he avoids equally well the extremes of such writers as Janet,³ Murisier, Leuba,⁴ and others, who regard the essential and distinctive characteristics of mysticism as pathological. That many of the phenomena found in the experiences of the mystics are pathological Delacroix does not deny, but these he regards as the excrescences rather than as the essentials of the mystic life. This much sounder attitude (for so at least it seems to me) he is able to take because of his broader view of mysticism as a development, rather than as a single state, and also because of his more empirical and exact study of the historical facts.

If space permitted something should be said of the admirable chapter in which the author analyzes and distinguishes the elements in the mystic life and doctrine due to teaching and tradition and those to be accounted for by immediate experience and psychic disposition. The book is replete with keen psychological analyses and deserves careful study. It is occasionally marred by repetitions and faulty arrangement of material, in this respect falling short of the clearness and brilliancy of exposition which one has come to expect in a French writer. This, however, is a matter of minor importance, and the book as a whole is probably the best treatise on the psychology of mysticism that has yet appeared.

JAMES BISSETT PRATT

WILLIAMS COLLEGE
WILLIAMSTOWN, MASS.

RECENT BOOKS ON CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOCIAL PROBLEM

Must moral leadership be sought outside the church? The church's position in present-day life will be determined by the facts which furnish

³ "Une extatique," and "Obsessions et psychasthenies," *Bulletin de l'Institut psychologique*. Paris, 1901.

⁴ "Tendances fondamentales des mystiques chrétiens," *Revue Philosophique*, LIV, 1-36 and 441-87.